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## Acknowledgments

My mother chose to name me after the Cathedral of San Marco in Venice because she had been moved by its beauty. Consequently, I had always assumed that I was named after Saint Mark himself, the “Patron Saint of Writers.” Expecting to take full advantage of my connection to such a holy personage, I would sometimes, during the many hours, weeks, and years I’ve wrestled with writer’s block, pray to San Marco to help me out a little bit.

He never did.

At least, not as far as I can tell.

And I just found out this evening why.

It turns out he’s the patron saint of notaries.

*Notaries.*

It figures.

Since Saint Mark wasn’t of much help to me in writing this book, I was indebted to a great many earthly helpers, who urged me to press on during my darker moments of agony and indecision and sloth....

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Marc Edward DiPaolo  
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